

Lambuth

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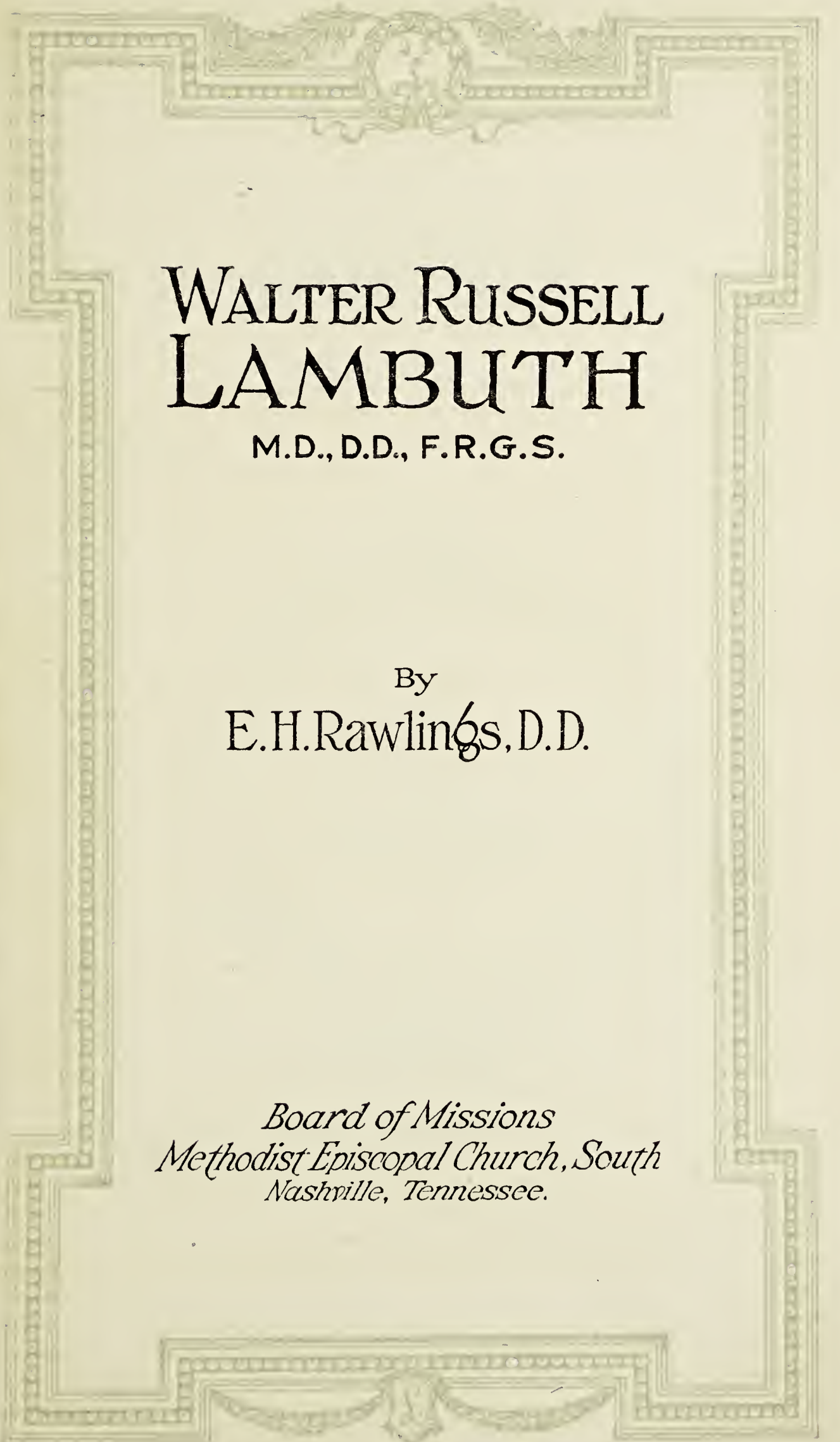
Biog.

WALTER  
RUSSELL  
LAMBUTH

MISSIONARY

*In  
Memoriam*





# WALTER RUSSELL LAMBUTH

M.D., D.D., F.R.G.S.

By  
E.H. Rawlings, D.D.

*Board of Missions  
Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
Nashville, Tennessee.*





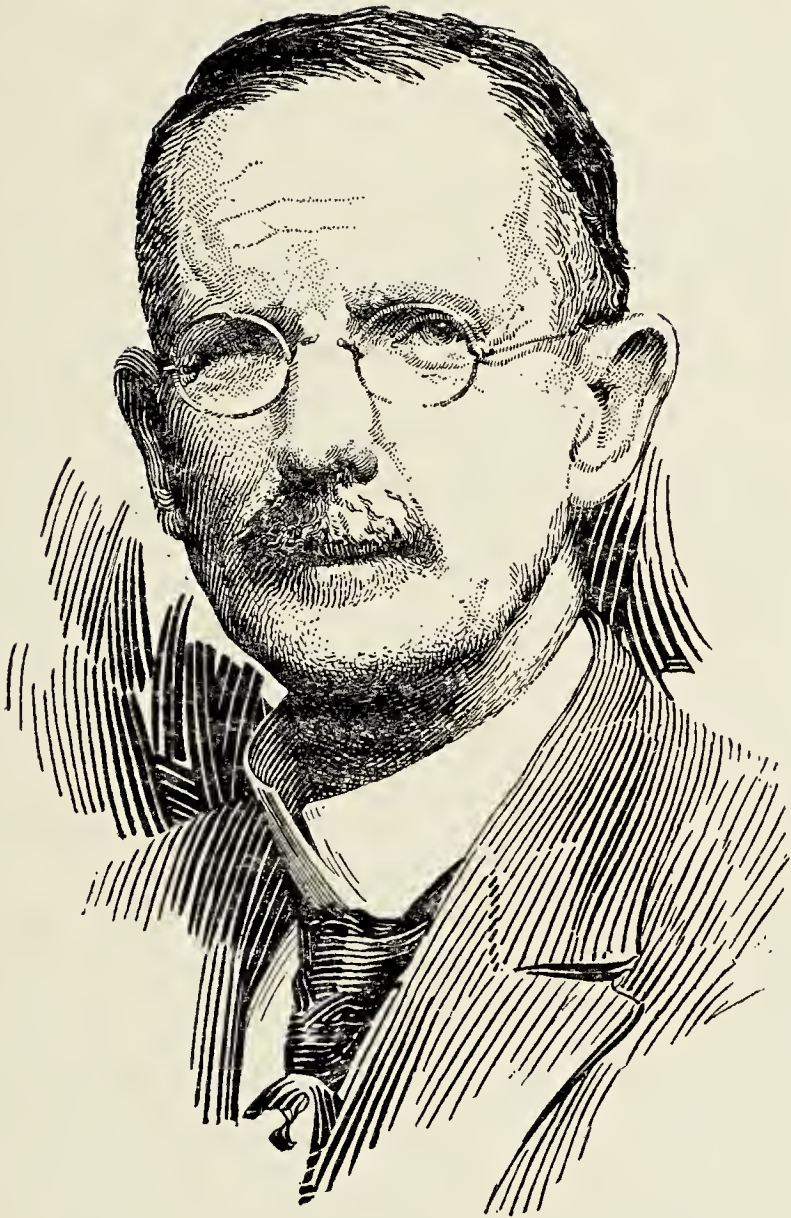
"Know ye not that there is a  
prince and a great man fallen  
this day in Israel." *II Samuel, 3:38*



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OUR  
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AND  
MINISTERS  
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"I shall be  
constantly watching"  
*Last words of Bishop Lambuth.*







Dr. E. H. Rawlings,  
810 Broadway,  
Nashville, Tennessee.  
Dear Dr. Rawlings:

I congratulate you on your worthy tribute to Bishop Lambuth. It is entirely fitting that this memorial to our best-beloved and most distinguished missionary and world citizen should have been written by one who traveled and wrought with him in many lands.

The Church, the missionaries and numberless friends and admirers of many faiths and in many countries will welcome what you have done to commemorate a great and unselfish ministry to mankind.

No words, however eloquent, can add to the lustre that his deeds have already lent to his memory. But your tribute has a greater mission than eulogy, however deserving, and has been inspired by a higher motive. May it be blessed of God in fulfilling that higher purpose of kindling the missionary passion, exalting prayer as a working force and so hastening the reign of Him whose coming into the world we are today celebrating.



Christmas Day, 1921.






## Foreword

This little booklet is not intended in any sense as a "Life" of Bishop Lambuth. Some man qualified in head and heart for the task will produce a larger work as a biography that should live as a missionary classic in the literature of the Church. It is too soon to speak definitely, but as one might naturally suppose the matter is under consideration by those concerned and we are hoping that service will not be long delayed.

At the last session of the Virginia Annual Conference, when I was asked to speak in a memorial service for Bishop Lambuth, the very thought of saying worthily the things that ought to be said was, on the instant, the despair of a heart that so profoundly cherished the precious things of his remarkable life. But in the busy hours of the Conference by day and by night the recollections of an intimate association for many years burned in my heart until they flowed forth in an estimate which voices, I hope, not only my own but the sincere and spontaneous sentiments of other thousands, great and small, in the Church, who knew him as friend and brother.






The paper was afterwards used in the Upper South Carolina and North Alabama Conferences, and though several times urged to give out the statement in some printed form, I did not finally decide to do so until a note came from Doctor S. H. Wainwright, Bishop Lambuth's long-time friend, enclosing an account of the revival in Oita, Japan, in the early days of the Japan Mission, in which Bishop Lambuth and others of his co-workers received a remarkable spiritual blessing. This account of the Oita experience supplied so admirably what I felt was lacking in my own paper and in the best estimate I had heard of Bishop Lambuth's life hitherto, that I decided to print the memorial paper just as read before the Annual Conferences, sending along with it the account of the Oita experience as a window through which the Church that so affectionately and profoundly cherishes his leadership may look in upon the deepest secret of his devoted life.

I do not know anyone who better than Bishop Lambuth combined with a generous appreciation of the best in modern intellectual method the old evangelical emphasis in the propagation of the Gospel. It is neither mystical nor mysterious, but simply Christian, to believe that the "anointing" he received at





Oita taught him how to hold safely the good middle way of loyalty and progress that he knew so well. I believe with all my heart that the safe way for the Church in a time of change and of confusion will not be found in the thesis of the critic, either higher or lower, but in the higher synthesis of Pentecost.

Since the beginning of the Centenary Movement I have visited all our old mission fields but one, and I have returned with one impression that glows and impels with the force of an invincible conviction; and it is that our supreme need in every field is for another Pentecost and that the set time for its coming is upon us if we will faithfully claim it. May the Centenary ideal everywhere struggling for utterance in a great revival find instant reinforcement in the recollection of this experience of our fallen leader.

*Ed Rawlings*








# Bishop Walter R. Lambuth

## MISSIONARY

The condition of Bishop Lambuth was more serious when he was leaving for the field last summer than his friends or even his physician knew. He was ill on board ship, got better, but was uncomfortable and far from well in the long trips he took in China, Korea and Manchuria, until during the sessions of the Japan Mission held in Karuizawa, his trouble became so acute that he must hurry for an operation to the Yokohama General Hospital, Yokohama, Japan.

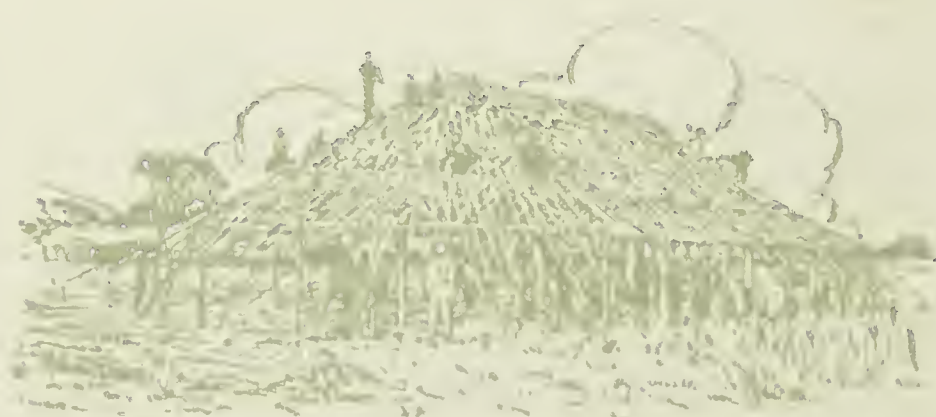
The operation was performed on September 13th, and a cable, coming immediately to his wife, said: "Operation, skilled American surgeon, doing nicely." September 15th the second cable said, "Doing nicely." September 16th, "Constant improvement," September 18th, "Out of Danger." But on September 26th two cables came. The first said, "Condition serious, heart complication," and a little later in the day another cable with the sorrowful message: "At rest, instruct Towson at Yokohama."






There is good reason to believe that he in some measure foresaw what so soon awaited him. In one of the last conversations I had with him before his return to the field, as we talked over the work, its outlook and needs, he confided the impression that he should not return to the East after this quadrennium; and, when I insisted that such was his relation to these fields that no one could do the work as could he, with the positiveness of conviction he still declared that he probably would not return.

Certainly when the summons came, his house was in order and he was ready with his accounting. The day before the operation in Yokohama, he dictated a letter to Doctor Pinson setting forth with characteristic thoughtfulness the condition of the work, and in a manner and spirit that in every line of that remarkable communication breathes the consciousness of impending change. That letter reached our office, and was first read many days after the end had come, and as the Church reads it now it will sound as it did to us, the voice of our great leader and friend speaking still the word of faithfulness so like him, but out of the silences of the world invisible and immortal:








General Hospital, Yokohama, Japan,  
September 11, 1921.

Doctor W. W. Pinson, Secretary,  
Nashville, Tenn.  
My dear Doctor:

It seems necessary, under the circumstances, that I write you a few lines concerning matters that pertain to the several Missions in the Orient. After landing in Shanghai, on the 8th of July, I proceeded to Soochow the next day and spent two days; then returned to Shanghai and left, on the 14th, for the famine area, through which I pressed, by rail, and satisfied myself that nothing more, in an organized way, needed to be done by the Committee in the United States. I went on to Songdo, Korea, via Mukden, and spent three days with Doctor Cram and then, with the party of four, including Cram, Taylor, Brannon and Ryang, went north in Manchuria, visiting Kirin and Harbin. We have already decided to hold the Annual Meeting of the Siberia-Manchuria Mission July 31st at Nikolsk, instead of at Harbin.

From thence, we proceeded to Vladivostok, spending a couple of days, then, returning to Harbin, turned northward to Songdo, arriving there August 10th. Here I spent nearly two weeks recuperating from a severe cold contracted in Nikolsk; but took advantage of the opportunity to go over plans and policies for Korea and Siberia with Doctor Cram, with Miss Myers concerning the new woman's plant in Seoul, with Deal and Carter about their industrial work; then went to Wonsan to meet the Presiding Elders on one day and the Medical men of the Mission on the next. Return-





ing to Seoul, I reviewed the Seminary educational policies and how to best conserve the results of the Centenary work with Doctors Hardie and Cram. During this visit I had an interview with the Governor-General to restore Miss Smith, who had been retired from the Principalship a year ago.

I outline the foregoing so that you may see nothing has been neglected. In fact, almost every possible preparation has been made for the Annual Meeting of the Korea Mission and for the Annual Conference.


I reached Karuizawa on Monday night, where the Annual Meeting was to begin on Tuesday, August 30th. For three days I was able to preside and meet with the District Superintendents. By Friday, it was imperative, under medical advice, to leave for a lower altitude, where it was warmer and where I could get much needed and skillful attention from a surgeon.

The appointments were all carefully made out before I left. Doctor Newton took the chair and Doctor F. S. Parker, by his presence and counsel, rendered most valuable assistance. Words fail to express what I suffered during the eighteen hours of travel and a night spent in Tokyo.

My long-time friend and dear brother, W. E. Towson, took me to the United States Naval Hospital in Yokohama, where Doctor Raymond Speer, who is surgeon in charge, relieved me, temporarily. I was brought to the Yokohama General Hospital and have been under his care for nine days, with but little amelioration of condition, and must go on the table tomorrow morning, Monday, September 12th. The surgeon is spoken of as one of the most skilled in Japan, the in-








stitution is well-ordered in every respect, and I have every attention a reasonable patient could expect.

This is evidently a return of the attack, in a much severer form, which I had on the Empress of Asia during the last week of the voyage before reaching Kobe. As you know, I went on to Shanghai, to have the company of Brother Nance in case of an emergency, and to get the continued benefit of the warmer atmosphere, which, through elimination, relieved the pelvic organs. I was so anxious not to fail in meeting my appointments, that I pushed on to Korea and Siberia, making the land journey of something like four thousand, two hundred miles without any great discomfort. The Korea Annual Conference will begin its session Wednesday, the 14th, but everything, to the last detail, has been provided for excepting the ordinations. They will elect their own President and I have authorized Doctor F. S. Parker to represent me in such matters as may pertain to the business of the Board of Missions.

The only remaining official business is that of holding the China Mission Conference in Soochow, October 19th. My surgeon says I will not be able to travel under thirty days. If I find it impossible to reach the Conference by the date mentioned, I will postpone it for two weeks. If I do not make a good recovery, the Presiding Elders will be informed through Doctor Hearn, and they will be under the necessity of carrying out the schedule without my presence.

It is with the keenest regret that I am obliged to make this statement, but the necessity is upon me. I do not regret coming, save for the absence of my wife and daughter at this juncture, and I long for their presence and ministry. But Mrs. Lambuth and I





committed ourselves to God years ago, when we first entered the Mission field in 1877, and we and all of our interests have been absolutely in His hands from that time to the present day.

Brother Towson read me the following words this morning from I. Peter, IV; 12, 13, 19—from Moffat's translation, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the ordeal that is come to test you, as though foreign experiences befell you. You are sharing what Christ suffered, so rejoice in it that you may also rejoice and exult when His glory is revealed. . . . So let those who are suffering by the will of God trust their souls to Him, their faithful Creator, as they continue to do right."

I have never experienced such joy in the ministry of the saints. The missionaries have manifested a tender solicitude as children to a father. I thank God for them and for the native Christians, who have been equally thoughtful and affectionate. May grace and peace abound in the hundreds of churches that have been established through godly men and women.

Since this has been dictated while lying in bed and I have no means of copying, I will get you to forward this to Bishop Collins Denny, Secretary of the College, to whom I shall address a few lines, to be read by my colleagues at the meeting in Richmond.

I pray that God will bless you in your burden bearing for others and in the many responsibilities of your office.

Cordially your brother,

W. R. LAMBUTH.

per W. E. Towson.






## HIS SIMPLE HEART

Bishop Lambuth was the simplest hearted great man I ever knew. The lowliest could approach him and feel at home in his friendly presence. On railroad trains and steamships it was a little child, an old lady without a companion, a lonely, unattractive stranger that attracted him. In every place, whether at home or abroad, in China and Japan as in America, there was some humble person, in no wise connected with his official responsibility, that must be looked up and seen.

In letters to the Secretary of the Board of Missions in which he pleaded for enterprises involving thousands of dollars, he took time to plead with equal urgency and even more apparent personal enthusiasm, for an old worn-out Korean preacher who had no roof to cover him, and no means of support; and, in a letter from his daughter in which she speaks of his business relation with the Board of Missions, she says, "Father carried no life insurance because he could not," and after referring several times to a subscription made by him to the old superannuates' home, she says, "We would like for the \$500 coming from the Tennessee Conference Brotherhood to be used for the home of the old Korean Preachers."



This does not mean that with his simple human naturalness were not found easily mingling elements of real greatness. Not such elements as impress and dazzle most when furthest seen, but such as broke upon you unannounced, but unmistakable, as you came closer to him. I have never known any man who would bear closer inspection, or any whose personality, to the men intimately associated with him, showed more continual surprises of greatness—those unfoldings of personality, insight, courage, and achievement that, finding a man in life's common-places, even while we look on and wonder at the transformation, lift him to the plane of the heroic and the truly great.


### HIS VISION OF FAR-AWAY FIELDS

I never knew a man who was so little satisfied with the here-and-now as he. I never knew a man who had such visions of far-away fields of need into which other men had not gone, or who possessed such courage, such restlessness, such passion of adventure to cross frontiers, explore unoccupied regions, lay new foundations and then build upon them.

When we were traveling together in the East, with the care of all the churches upon








him and the details of official service in three missions crowding constantly upon his thought, we found him thinking and talking almost constantly of a new mission in what at that time seemed the impossible field of Manchuria and Siberia. In spite of discouragements and difficulties, he was not satisfied until he himself had explored the field, made his representation to the Board of Missions, and with the Board's authorization gone in his own devoted person to open this new and last of our mission fields. It was with an exultation almost boyish in his enthusiasm that, in reporting the consummation of his plan in Siberia, he says in one of his last letters: "For its age, one year only, it is the lustiest mission we ever started;" and out of the pain and feebleness of that trying missionary journey, he exclaims in cheerfulness and confidence, "I am feeling better, the wonderful work in Korea and in Siberia has been a tonic."

Twenty-nine years ago, when visiting in my home in Ashland, Virginia, he confided the hope he had long cherished that some day he might be privileged to open up a mission to Africa. "Here," I said, "is a wonderful thing. Born the son of a missionary and serving for many years as a missionary in








sides the Siberia-Manchuria and Congo Missions, he opened the Japan Mission and was its first superintendent. He was intimately related to the establishing of the Korean Mission; he organized the Texas Mexican Mission and the Pacific-Mexican Mission. In the eleven years of his episcopal service he served as Bishop in charge in Brazil, in Africa, in Mexico, and in the Orient; and in this time he visited Mexico twice, Brazil twice, Africa twice, the Orient three times, and Siberia twice. In all he made about eighteen trips to Cuba, sixteen to Mexico, six to Brazil, two to the heart of Africa on foot, and six or seven to the Orient. Surely no man ever wore or won more worthily than he the honorable fellowship conferred upon him by one of the great geographical societies of the world.

## IN VAST ACHIEVEMENTS


But his vision and courage were no more wonderful than his achievements. He was no mere visionary, projecting things in every land and letting them fall away beneath nervous and impatient hands. He had the patience and skill to work out the multitude of things he so courageously began. I thought I knew something of his work as a missionary already, but it was only when I traveled in




China, pioneering, and with his great father opening up for us the mission in Japan, his great restless spirit would not be satisfied until he had gone with the story of the Gospel into the heart of the darkest continent on earth!"

How he followed this little gleam out of his own heart into the darkness, through the vicissitudes of official service, how against the judgment of good men who, with their practical wisdom, had not his vision or his courage, like some modern Livingstone, he penetrated the wilderness, and taking with him a little handful of missionaries, as the spirit and God's providence led him, and at the very place to which, by tokens strange but unmistakable, that spirit led, he opened up our seventh mission in the heart of the Belgian Congo, how he caught the imagination of the Epworth League and through our young people carried the heart of the Church with him into Africa—all this and much more of the story is now written down in the record, and in the history of the Church will be read as one of the romances of modern missions.

If this spirit of sanctified adventure had moved only once or twice it would not have been so wonderful, but it was the habitual and dominant thing in his life throughout. Be-







missionary territory, especially in the Oriental fields, that I came fully to appreciate the work he had done as a missionary long before his service as secretary or bishop was begun.

Everywhere in these three countries I came upon his footprints and rejoiced in the sure foundations laid by his skilled hands. Away up at Peking, in the North, where our Church has no work, in the Llama Temple he told us how fifteen years before the priests had driven him out of the temple in imminent peril of his life. He mentioned what I had not known, that thirty years before he had opened the medical work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city, and one day as we stood in the magnificent building of the Young Men's Christian Association he recalled modestly that he had organized that Association, which was one of the first, if not the very first, Association organized in China.

At Soochow I saw the University whose foundations his hand had laid, and in that same city the hospital that by Centenary funds is growing into one of the three or four great hospitals of China, and that as a young physician with his brother-in-law, Doctor Park, he founded. At the China Annual Conference, I heard him, without an interpreter, preach the Conference sermon in Chinese, and




he so delighted the Chinese that they exclaimed: "We have a Chinese Bishop at last."

In Japan his work was even more remarkable. The church at Central Kobe, now being rebuilt into what will be probably the most imposing church structure in Japan, he originally built, and much of it with his own hands. The Kwansei Gakuin, with a student body of 1700, the largest institution in the world with which our Church is connected, and going to the status of a university in a short time, he founded. In order to get possession of the land that he had purchased with money coming to him in answer to prayer, he and his cultured wife moved into a barn located on the campus, and for a time used a hay loft for a bed.

The Palmore Night School, with an unusual registration of 1220, was the product of his work, and many of the leaders of Japan Methodism today were trained under his hand, when, as a missionary, he taught the boys in this night school. With his father he founded the Hiroshima Girls' School. At the General Conference in Tokyo I was introduced to a splendid Japanese preacher who saluted me with a cordial welcome in English. The next day he was elected Bishop of the Japan Methodist Church. That stalwart young







leader had come to Christ and been largely trained for his great leadership under the ministry of Bishop Lambuth, speaking of him affectionately as his "Great Lover." And when I saw the strength and influence of the Japan Methodist Church, one of the great churches of that country and of the world, I could not forget that one of Bishop Lambuth's last acts as Missionary Secretary was to share in the setting apart and organization of the Methodist Church in Japan.


In Mexico, Cuba and Brazil, with native as with missionary, his name is a household word, and his going away will be felt by multitudes in all these lands as a great personal sorrow.

### TRUE IN THE GREAT TESTING

But no less than in his power to see and adventure was he great in his power to suffer. So quiet and uncomplaining was he that no one would have suspected who did not know that his life was ever other than smooth and unruffled. But besides the fact that physically, as his daughter says in a recent letter, he was far from strong, there were conditions in his home that made his service in recent years peculiarly trying. Through those days and nights of travel and toil in the








Far East, we knew that in spite of his unfailing cheerfulness he was carrying a breaking heart. He was thinking of the stricken companion many miles away and needing so much his companionship and tender care.

When information came to him that he had been assigned as Bishop to the Orient, undecided what he should do in view of his wife's critical condition, he turned to her and asked, "What about it?" Without a moment's hesitation she answered, "You are going."

He came to Korea in the midst of the bitterest religious persecution that has come to the Church in any country in modern times, and, entering so completely into the fellowship of their sufferings, he endeared himself all the more to them by speaking freely of his wife's solicitude for the Korean people, telling them that when he hesitated to leave her, because it seemed doubtful now, if he did, that he should ever see her alive again, she had said: "No, no, you must go. The Koreans need you more than I do."

The sacrifice of both was no less heroic, or their suffering less real and poignant, that an agreement in sacred dedication many years before, made this pathway of loneliness plain beneath their pilgrim feet. In one of his last letters to Doctor Pinson, he said: "My wife






and I put ourselves into God's hands years ago, and we are in His hands now. I have no fear for the future. He leads and provides."

### HIS LIFE'S SECRET

The secret of his life is not far to seek. The spirit of unselfishness in service, of humility and faith and sacrifice, mark him as a man who had been with Jesus Christ, and the providences of his life strongly suggest that at the hand of his great Master he carried some high commission.

His great-grandfather, William Lambuth, was born in Hanover County, Virginia, and was sent by Bishop Asbury as a missionary to the Indians in the wilds of Tennessee. His grandfather, also a William, was sent as a missionary to the Indians of Alabama. In the midst of a protracted meeting which he was conducting in Greene County, Alabama, in 1839, William Lambuth left without explanation. When he returned they were in a missionary meeting, and he explained his absence by saying: "I was called home by the birth of a baby boy. In heartfelt gratitude I dedicated the child to the Lord as a foreign missionary, and I now add a bale of cotton to send him with." The baby was James William Lambuth, father of our great Bishop.






The young teacher from the North that cast in her fortune with J. W. Lambuth, becoming in vision and courage as great a missionary as either her husband or her son, before their marriage put \$5.00 into a missionary collection, with a card saying, "I give myself to this noble work." The grace of Jesus Christ in his wonderfully gracious life answered throughout to the providence of his great vocation. In these prenatal days, taking 133 days then from America to China, upon the rolling sea, who would say that into his dawning spirit was not wrought, in the very constitution and fiber of his personality, that restlessness which, when he had once heard the call and received his royal commission, would not rest or pause, but going, ever going, crossing new frontiers, exploring new fields, our pioneer and explorer, the great Pathfinder of our Methodism, could never for a moment pitch his moving tent so long as upon the soil of this whole earth there was still one solitary field unoccupied by the Church of Jesus Christ. Certainly the vision of J. W. Lambuth, the courage and heroism of Mary Lambuth, came inevitably to the boy of that home as his greatest inheritance, becoming also his best equipment for the high service of the Church and his generation to which God's Providence called him.








A great evangelist of the last generation has said: "The world is yet to see what one man might accomplish whose life was wholly given to God." In the life of the evangelist himself the world well nigh saw it, but in no one else in our generation was that demonstration more nobly made than in the life of Walter Lambuth. In my heart I believe that the great apostle to the Gentiles was not more truly separated from his mother's womb for the work to which he was called than was Walter Lambuth to lead out a Church, and largely the Church in his generation, into larger fields of missionary endeavor and achievement.

### THE WHOLE CHURCH MOURNS

It is not, therefore, wonderful that when the cable came announcing the death of Walter Lambuth, church bells tolled from one end of our great Southland to the other, for all over this country, and not in our own Church only, there are multitudes of people who mourn his going as a brother and friend. Long before his death, a distinguished leader of another Church, in some public statement, declared that the most heroic and self-sacrificing missionary it had been his privilege to know was Bishop Walter R. Lambuth, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In one of the great






inter-denominational committees convening in New York, when intelligence of his death came, announcement was formally made and testimonies were given of his great service to his generation. And one of the world's great religious leaders, voicing the feeling of us all in prayer said: "We are inexpressibly shocked by the word that has just come to us of the going away of our great friend and brother; we are still groping and cannot find our way, the chasm made by his going is so vast."

Those of us who were closest to him and officially associated with him find ourselves lonely and embarrassed at every turn of the work in the fields to which he was so peculiarly related. We are stunned, and are staggering our way beneath the mystery of his untimely taking away. That mystery hangs still about us. But I can only think with reverence of that time when the great Master of us all paused at the noon-tide of his work and said that he must lay it down, and when His disciples besought him to remain and continue to lead them, He only assured them it was better that he went away, for only so would he send his spirit upon the Church. It is no sacrilege or irreverence to think of our fallen leader in the fashion of his great Master.

May it not be that as much as we need the








inspiration and guidance of his personal leadership, even more does the Church need the touch and contagion of his great spirit!

And if to the Church, in a time like this, shall come his spirit of vision and courage, a passion for service that counts no cost and a confidence, a faith in God, that dares any danger or difficulty—if as we look with sorrowful eyes to see him as he is taken away from us this day, a double portion of the spirit of Walter Lambuth shall come upon us all, the hurt of our loneliness will for many days endure but the Providence of his going will be clear and sure.

“Tomorrow I go under the surgeon’s knife. I have no fear and feel no anxiety for the result, that is with God and Him alone, whose I am and whom I serve. I am concerned about the work and the workers in these four great fields and about the peace and health of my loved ones at home, but these and they are in the care and keeping of the great Shepherd of the sheep.”—Words of Bishop Lambuth the day before the operation.





# Bishop Walter R. Lambuth

## A MEMORY

The past is not all alike to us. Some of the events of the years gone by are but as dim legends to us now. Other events leave behind impressions that resemble the glow on the mountain tops reflected by the setting sun after it has dropped below the horizon. It is an event of the latter kind of which I wish to give an account. More than three decades have intervened since that day, yet, the personal experience of the small group of men, who were made to rejoice together, is as vivid to our minds now as something that occurred yesterday.

The place where the event occurred was Oita, our first mission station. It was a prefectural seat on the island of Kyushiu, a town situated on the curved shore of a bay which forms a part of the Inland Sea famed for its scenery. It was here that Francis Xavier, more than two centuries before, had come ashore and won over to the Catholic faith the Daimio and many of his people. It was on this island that persecution later wrought its greatest havoc, when every visible trace of




Catholicism was destroyed in Japan. It was on ground made sacred by Christian martyrdoms, at that time of bitter opposition, when both missionaries and Japanese converts sealed their faithfulness with the cheerful offering up of life itself. It was among a population, required for two centuries afterward and until 1872, to trample on the cross of Christ and renounce the "Evil Sect." It was not far away from this place, in a neighboring town, called Takeda, that an old bell still hangs in a heathen temple, with a cross molded into it, a fitting symbol of the apparent defeat of the earlier Christian missions projected in that region.

It was at Oita, amidst such surroundings, that we first took up our task as missionaries to Japan. We stepped ashore at 2 o'clock in the morning, accompanied by Dr. Lambuth, the Superintendent of the Mission, who left us after a day or two to work out our problems in this new and peculiar field. In the morning the sun rose over beyond the Bungo Nada and the Pacific Ocean and the homeland far away. In the evening, the group of hills at Beppu, about 8 miles away, glowed with the light of the sunset and had been smoothed down and clothed in verdure, though in the not long ago they were active volcanoes, and still con-








cealed in their depths burning fires. It would be beyond words to tell how happy we were during the first days and months, tasting the unspeakable joy of seeing realized the bright dreams that had brought us across the Pacific Ocean in an adventure for the Master's cause. We set to work with unbounded enthusiasm. The people were friendly. The choicest young folks of the community gathered about us. Success seemed easy and victory a prize won without cost. There were many hearty decisions for Christ among the young men and young women who came to our place for Bible study.

But in the course of time the new loyalties of the young converts came into conflict with ancient customs. Young Hirotsu, for example, a student in the normal school, where Mrs. Wainright was teaching, was expelled. He had declined on the ground of conscience, a new principle of action in matters of faith in that community, to worship the spirits of fallen soldiers at the annual ceremony conducted in the cemetery for that purpose. There was much persecution in the homes of the Christians. The Yanagiwara brothers suffered much at the hands of their father whose business it once was to see that the people trampled on the cross of Christ. The



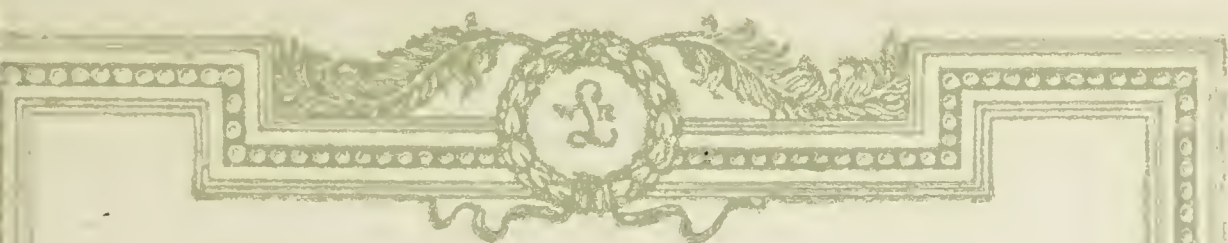




opposition deepened and grew bitter and became threatening and even violent. Our house was attacked and our lives were threatened. When adversaries without were most active, a blow from within was more disheartening still. The most mature member of our congregation turned atheist and sought to overthrow the faith of the others among whom he had been the leader.

Matters were fast approaching a crisis. Our responsibility bore heavily upon us. Had not those young souls responded to our appeals, and, in many instances, accepted the call to Christian faith and service at the cost of peace in the home and of good fellowship with their friends? They had accepted the Scriptures and doctrines of the Church and were obedient in all things and were ready to suffer for the cause they had championed. They had been established with us in Christ, yet there was a feeling of insecurity which troubled us. We could not say that "God hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." We had introduced the tradition, the word of testimony, on which the cause rested. Our strength was in the letter and not in the spirit. The congregation had been trained to Christian work, disciplined in the Christian life and taught the






scriptures, so far as we in our youthful way were able to do the work of missionaries. Yet we felt that all odds were against us. The world and its opposition, the intractable customs of an ancient society, and the powers of darkness always and everywhere ready to contest every step made in Christian advance, seemed too great to be overcome. We were all young, all laymen and all inexperienced.

At the time when the most critical stage was reached, prayer became a reality in our lives. It was our last resort and should have been our first. We knew literally what it was to pray without ceasing, to carry about with us day and night a crushing burden, to call upon God for some token of His presence and manifestation of His power when the need for such was indeed desperate; what it was to continue in supplication until even physical strength failed us and our hearts grew faint with much pleading. But never for a moment did a doubt cast a shadow upon our own minds that God was able to perform a mighty work in Oita as he had done in the camp meeting and in the revival service in the homeland to which we had been witnesses from childhood.

The year was drawing to a close, our second year at Oita, when Dr. Lambuth, Y. Yoshioka and H. Nakamura visited us. When we








informed Dr. Lambuth that for more than two months we had been engaged in incessant prayer for victory in that community, we were greatly surprised to hear from his own lips that he himself for sometime had been earnestly seeking a blessing in his own personal life and a greater degree of spiritual power in the work. He had been engaged in medical work up to the time he came to Japan where new responsibilities were placed upon him, as Superintendent of the Mission, for Christian leadership. He had been brought to feel a sense of need, a deep desire for spiritual qualifications to do the work now expected of him, and directly connected with the furtherance of the gospel. He expressed the hope that the converging of lines of prayer our conversation had brought to light would result in a signal answer while they were present at Oita and before the end of the year.

We do not recall whether it was on the last day of the year or a day or two earlier. But preceding a night service that had been announced for the congregation, four of us knelt for prayer in my study about four o'clock in the afternoon, namely W. R. Lambuth, Y. Yoshioka, H. Nakamura and myself. After we had spent some time on our knees, and while Dr. Lambuth was praying, a very








strange thing occurred. While praying in a deliberate manner, his voice suddenly began to show weakness and gradually seemed to fail him. We could tell by his language that he felt a disturbed sense of the presence of God. He begged for release from an oppression his strength could not endure. What troubled him, and seemed to terrify him, was a consciousness that God was near and mysteriously visible to him. His failing strength, which might have alarmed us, really gave us no concern. And yet it seemed that life was actually sinking away. When his voice grew weak and reached almost the vanishing point, he began to call upon Christ to stand between him and the overpowering Presence. That plea evidently met with response, for he began to rally and seemed to have a distinct vision of the approach of Christ. At this point not only did he begin to rally, but what seemed to be an upward tide swept the room. It carried away burdens that had rested heavily upon us for months. It liberated our spirits and our joy was so great that we scarcely knew whether we were in the body or out of the body. The time slipped by without our knowledge and before we had arisen from our knees the maid came to announce the evening meal. No one went to the table, as we remember. The experience of the after-






noon was so intense we were preoccupied with the joy of the moment. The upper rooms were not all in Jerusalem, but there in that distant spot God had poured out his Spirit upon us as upon those at the beginning.

The evening hour soon came and the congregation gathered in the adjoining house where a place of worship had been provided by converting two large rooms into one. Dr. Lambuth opened the service and Dr. Yoshioka delivered the address, speaking with great earnestness. Indeed there was a peculiar glow upon his face as he told of Christ and his grace to save. After a song all knelt in prayer. Following the custom one succeeded another in leading the congregation. It was while we were on our knees, that suddenly out of the great unseen there swept upon us and through the congregation a power as real as it was mysterious. All seemed to bow under its influence as the grain sways before the wind. Some were overawed. Some were smitten in their consciences. Some were made joyously happy. It was a memorable scene. Namio Yanagiwara, one of the leaders among the young men, rose to his feet, opened the New Testament at the second chapter of Acts and began to read. Lifting the Book up so that all








could see it and pointing his finger to the Word, he declared with earnestness and emphasis that the account which they had read, but hitherto could not understand, was now fulfilled before their eyes. It was well on toward midnight when the closing hymn was sung and when all faces seemed to be as one face because of the common light that rested upon all. On the way home some were converted who had been present. The next night so many came that the big front gates had to be barred after the house was filled. It was noised abroad among the people that God had come down and made himself known to the Christian congregation.

Such is an outline account of the event about which Bishop Lambuth took a peculiar delight in speaking. We have retold the story in order to relate the part he had in it, and to give an account of his memorable experience from the point of view of those present in the room, an experience about which he said little when telling the story of the Oita Revival. We have spoken of the situation in order that the conditions most peculiar and trying may throw light upon what took place. Bishop Lambuth's death, we believe, was the first break in that circle of men who were made to drink together of the one Spirit. The two






Yanagiwara brothers, Kugimiya, Oshima, Yoshioka, Nakamura and others who were present have wrought faithfully through the years and are now outstanding as leaders in the Japan Methodist Church. All alike look back to the time about which we have written as to a Pentecost.

Whatever may be said of the nature of the event at Oita, it brought nothing but good to the lives of those who had part in it. What took place was swift and immediate and decisive, yet the fruit has been permanent through the succeeding years. There was something about the experience that answered perfectly to the heart yearning of those who entered into it. God's Word was apprehended in a fresh light that day and was relished in its own living significance and power. The Christian religion asserted itself, so to speak, in its absoluteness. We were made to feel that our sufficiency was in the Spirit, without the need of dependence upon any earthly power.

Among those so signally blessed by this supernatural visitation, none was more profoundly impressed than was Bishop Lambuth himself. None had a more fundamental understanding of its true nature and meaning than he. In a letter to the *MISSIONARY REPORTER* of May, 1890, he detailed the spiritual







manifestation and his article produced a deep effect throughout the missionary world.

“These persecutions,” he wrote “brought Dr. Wainwright and his noble band of boys down upon their knees. By the time we reached Oita an atmosphere of an approaching shower of grace was over them and filled the church. Upon the evening of December 31 four of us assembled in our brother’s sitting-room as one man for prayer and rededication of ourselves. We then and there received such a revelation of the presence of the Almighty as we had never before experienced. For two hours we four wrestled with God. It was our Peniel. We saw God face to face, and were preserved. I say this with awe and humility. Such a humbling of ourselves we never had before. The awful presence of a pure and holy God threw us upon our faces prostrate before him.

“After two hours we arose, and gazed into each other’s faces with mute astonishment; whether in the body or not in the body, we scarcely knew. Unable to eat supper, with one accord we assembled in the adjoining chapel. One of our native brethren—Brother Yoshioko—preached as though inspired. I have never before heard such a sermon from any tongue. The Holy Spirit fell upon us



with a mighty rush and swayed the congregation as if by the sweep of a tornado. Conviction was followed by conversion, and the shouts of the redeemed ascended to heaven.


“Four young men have been called to the ministry as a result of that meeting. Two are in our Kobe Bible school today. Two Bible women have been given us. The young men—God bless them—rushed from the house after 12 o’clock that night; and going to their homes, waked their heathen parents from their heavy slumbers, and with tears urged them to repentance. The Lord answered their prayers, and the parents of several came during the next two days, and with moistened eyes confessed that they had wronged their sons.

“In ten days more the blessing came to our boys’ school in Kobe, and at this writing not one heathen boy is left in our dormitories; to a man they have professed faith in Christ as a personal Saviour. Rejoice with us, dear Doctor; this is indeed the hand of the Lord. ‘His hand is not shortened.’ ”

There was a rich significance in Bishop Lambuth’s experience that afternoon. How different it was from what is often described as the mystic realization of God! There was nothing vague or abstract or indistinct about







it. God was certainly more than an experience to him. He was an object as well. It was no "pure presence" of which he was conscious. The Divine Realities were as concrete to him as the interior of the room in which we knelt. There was an impulse to constant activity with Bishop Lambuth which in part may have been a matter of temperament and in part the outworking of an eager mind. But I never could be made to believe that his years of activity and unwearied devotion to the Church were ever to be explained apart from the intense moments at Oita when his life seemed to hang by a brittle thread so overpowered was he by the mysteries of the Triune God, as truly objective to him as they were divine. Now that the Church contemplates his career as a whole and will preserve it in memory as one of its treasures, it is our feeling that nothing in his eventful years is so capable of becoming a blessing to others as a consideration of his deep experience on the occasion he himself took such a delight in talking about to others.

*S. H. Williams, Jr.*

"In our fraternal sympathy with our sister Church in this hour of her bereavement, the Board of Foreign Missions, here assembled, wish to record the conviction that in the passing of this fine spirit, this vision-gifted missionary, this eminent bishop, this stalwart son of God, we and the entire Christian world experience a loss unmeasured by words, while the annals of the Church of Christ will evermore be enriched by the memory of a life to which we would pay the tribute of our emulation."—Memoirs Committee of the M. E. Church, Nov. 28, 1921.







## OUR PRAYER

We thank Thee, our Father, for the gift of this thy faithful servant. As abides in our hearts the sweet memory of his life and testimony among us, may a double portion of his spirit come upon us,—his vision and courage; his unselfishness and faith and patience; his passion of service, whether for continent, heathen stranger or humblest little child; his unfaltering loyalty to the last commandment of our Lord. Upon the heart of the Church at home and abroad to its remotest bounds, sorrowful and chastened by his going, let there come the spirit of his great Master and ours—the spirit of enduement for service in world-wide Pentecost. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.







